

## *“In Lieu Of” Military Police* \_\_\_\_\_

# New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers Earn Right to Proudly Wear Brassard

*By Captain David A. Beveridge*

*The soldiers of C Company, 759th Military Police Battalion, are a diverse group of men. Back in the United States, they are organic to the 3d Battalion, 112th Field Artillery Regiment, or the 5th Squadron, 117th Cavalry Regiment, both from the New Jersey Army National Guard. Among their youngest soldiers are 19-year-old college students, and among their oldest soldiers is a 57-year-old Vietnam veteran. As civilians, some earn their living as schoolteachers, police officers, engineers, small-business owners, and factory workers. As soldiers, they are cannoneers, forward observers, tankers, and scouts.*

For their deployment last year to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, however, they did not serve as artillery or cavalry soldiers, but as “in lieu of” (ILO) military police. With their professionalism and dedication to duty in Iraq, these soldiers earned the right to proudly wear the military police brassard. They also earned a reputation as some of the hardest fighters in the history of the Military Police Corps, according to the commander of the 89th Military Police Brigade. With 4 soldiers killed in action and 29 wounded, C Company has suffered more casualties than any military police company since C Company, 716th Military Police Battalion, which took more than 40 casualties while defending Saigon during the 1968 North Vietnamese Tet Offensive.

On 5 January 2004, B Battery, 3d Battalion, 112th Field Artillery Regiment, was mobilized for deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (When the battery arrived in Iraq and was organized under the 89th Military Police Brigade, it was operationally redesignated as C Company. All ILO military police units under the 89th Military Police Brigade were named in this manner.) C Company soldiers came from 13 New Jersey Army National Guard units. From 7 January to 21 February, C Company underwent military police training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. Soldiers trained on all military police weapons systems and military police tasks. Though this provided C Company soldiers with a general overview of military police missions, the most important aspects of the training at Fort Dix were the motivation and

esprit de corps that developed in the unit. Despite the snow, below-freezing temperatures, and 18- to 20-hour training days, the soldiers had “never-ending energy,” said one noncommissioned officer.

After training at Fort Dix, C Company landed in Kuwait, and by 7 March, it had moved to Camp Cuervo in Baghdad, Iraq. There the company received training from the unit it was replacing. C Company soldiers learned important real-world lessons during this training.

From 15 April to 15 May, one C Company platoon was operationally assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Fallujah. The platoon’s mission was to patrol the main supply route between Fallujah and Baghdad, escort supply convoys, and provide security for explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams searching for and disarming improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in the area. The platoon’s patrols and security escorts kept critical supplies flowing to Marines fighting in Fallujah. On one grueling occasion, the platoon escorted an EOD team for 27 continuous hours.

In April, C Company soldiers began providing site security at Iraqi police stations in eastern Baghdad and Sadr City, a sprawling slum on the northeastern edge of Baghdad. In June, they also began training and equipping Iraqi police at these stations. Though not trained for these specific missions, C Company soldiers used skills from their diverse professional backgrounds to achieve success, said the company first sergeant, who is a police officer in civilian life.

Other soldiers who worked in civilian law enforcement and medical and engineering positions also provided valuable insights that contributed to mission success.

From mid-May to early June, C Company became engaged in fierce combat operations against the Mahdi army of Muqtada al-Sadr in Sadr City. Soldiers told harrowing stories of patrols through densely crowded slums where gutters overflowed with raw sewage and streets were littered with trash, burning tires, destroyed vehicles, and the carcasses of animals slaughtered at roadside butcher shops. Barefoot children would first wave and smile at the soldiers then begin throwing rocks, bricks, and even Molotov cocktails. When US soldiers arrived at Iraqi police stations, insurgents frequently attacked with small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortars within 10 or 15 minutes. On Mother's Day 2004, six C Company soldiers defended an Iraqi police station for approximately two hours against more than 100 Mahdi army insurgents, killing 19, according to media accounts.

Over two days—4 and 5 June 2004—four C Company soldiers were killed in two IED ambushes on the outskirts of Sadr City. The deaths of Staff Sergeant Frank Carvill, Staff Sergeant Humberto Timoteo, Specialist Ryan Doltz, and Specialist Christopher Duffy dealt a devastating blow to the entire unit.

“It was horrible,” said Duffy and Carvill’s platoon leader. “We mourned...but we understood that we had to continue to do our mission. Nobody said we should give up.” Squads began missions by holding hands and praying together. When they returned, entire platoons would pour out of the barracks to greet them with hugs and pats on the back and to help them remove their weapons and gear.

C Company currently supports the 1st Cavalry Division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT). Division leaders have been impressed with C Company, and many were shocked to find out that the unit was a National Guard ILO company. With the 1st BCT, C Company soldiers continued to train and rebuild the Iraqi police force. They recruited and screened more than 1,000 new police cadets; provided millions of dollars in weapons, ammunition, and uniforms to police officers; and continued to provide security at police stations. They also worked



**A C Company team leader provides critical site security at an Iraqi police station in Sadr City.**

closely with the local civilian population by providing food and care packages, as well as medics to treat sick or injured men, women, and children at the police stations.

With might, muscle, compassion, and courage, C Company soldiers have made a lasting mark in the military history of the Field Artillery and Military Police Corps. Their battles in Sadr City and Baghdad will be remembered along with battles fought by other 3d Battalion, 112th Field Artillery Regiment soldiers at Trenton, New Jersey; Antietam, Maryland; and Saint Lo, France and with battles fought by military police in Vietnam, Panama, and Iraq. Their contributions to the Iraqi people during Operation Iraqi Freedom have won many hearts and minds in the fight to create a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Iraq. C Company soldiers have earned the recognition and praise they have received from the leaders of many US Army organizations.